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[No. 34, Second Series.—3000]

THE CONDITION

OF THE

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OF

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By Constance Goddard DuBois

PHILADELPHIA:
OFFICE OF THE INDIAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION
No. 1305 Arch Street
1901

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THE CONDITION OF THE MISSION INDIANS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

By CONSTANCE GODDARD Du BOIS.

Few Indians are so little known as the Mission Indians of Southern California; few have been so neglected by the Government; and yet there is in no other case better material for producing all the fruits of civilization by building up out of their past, where already a good foundation had been laid. Their history is unique in this respect.

In 1767 Spain sent a military expedition to conquer California and with it sent a band of missionary priests with orders to convert and civilize the Indians; and so successfully did they fulfil their appointed task that in thirty-one years they had gathered in the Mission communities 13,500 Indian converts, and had taught them many of the arts and industries of civilized life, so many, indeed, that the list would surprise those careless observers who declare that Indians are naturally lazy simply because we have forced them to remain unemployed.

The Spaniards taught them to be "saddlers, blacksmiths, coopers, freighters, candle-makers, vintagers, coppersmiths, hatters, guitar-makers, muleteers, ranchmen, doctors, rope-makers, shepherds, woodcutters, painters, sculptors, bell-ringers, masons, acolytes, sacristans, stonecutters, cooks, soap-makers, tanners, weavers, tilemakers, embroiderers, farmers, herders, barbers, carpenters, and basket-makers," and all these trades were practically applied in the daily life of the Mission community. Indians built the Mission churches whose ruins are the admiration of the tourist in Southern California. They carved the fonts and altar-rails and statues, made musical instruments, and played upon them in the choirs. They learned to emboss leather,

engrave horn, inlay wood and iron with silver; the women were taught embroidering in gold and silver thread, lace work, drawn work, and the native basket-making was encouraged.

The success of this practical work shows what wise statesmanship could devise and devoted Christian purpose accomplish with no previous preparation in an incredibly short space of time toward building up an Indian civilization "as beautiful as it was transient." Evil days began for the Indians when the rule of Spain was exchanged for that of Mexico; but even under Mexico the legal rights of the Indians as human beings and land-owners were respected as they have never been under the United States. Grants of land were made subject to the express stipulation that the Indians settled upon such land and their successors and heirs should never be molested.

In 1848 California became by conquest and purchase the property of the United States; and when the crowding settlers, crazy with greed of gold and greed of land, came pushing in, there was no wise statesman, no Christian priest, to inquire who or what were the possessors of that land. Indians, to the settler, were no more than herds of wild deer, to be driven back in advance of the white man. They did not stop to notice that these Indians were many of them industrious and civilized, settled as agricultural communities with farms, orchards, and vineyards, on land where they had peaceably maintained themselves for generations.

The history of this brutal aggression can not be summed up in any phrase or paragraph, for it has never ended, is still in progress, and will continue, unless some legal barrier is thrown about him for his defense, until the last Mission Indian has been exterminated.

In 1883 Helen Hunt Jackson and Abbot Kinney were sent as special agents by the Government to report on the condition of the Mission Indians, and although the report

made was very full and convincing, almost none of its recommendations was acted upon, and many of them apply with even greater force now than at that time; for in all these seventeen years the same story of the white man's theft of land and the Indians' forced retreat has been going on.

"The first and most essential step," says Mrs. Jackson, "without which there is no possibility of protecting these Indians or doing anything intelligently for them, is the determining, re-surveying, rounding out, and distinctly marking, their reservations already existing. The only way of having this done accurately and honestly is to have it done by a surveyor who is under the orders and constant supervision of an intelligent and honest commissioner; not by an independent surveyor who runs or floats reservation lines where he and his friends or interested parties choose, instead of where the purpose of the United States Government, looking to the Indians' interests, had intended. There have been too many surveys of Indian reservations in Southern California of this sort. All the reservations made in 1876—and that comprises nearly all now existing—were laid off by guess, by the surveyor in San Diego, on an imperfect county map. When the actual survey came to be made, it was discovered that in the majority of cases the Indian villages intended to be provided for were outside the reservation lines, and that the greater part of the lands set aside were wholly worthless."

The flourishing Indian village of Santa Ysabel, to which Mrs. Jackson refers as showing the Indians' thrift and industry, has been swallowed up by the surrounding ranch, which is constantly making new surveys to extend its boundary-lines to take in the last patch of fertile land on the borders of the Indian reservation. For this reservation a barren mountain-side has now been given, with only a few tillable spots here and there, of less than half an acre each; yet even upon this miserable refuge the white man

has intruded, for the best of the land upon the upper slopes where there is water has been appropriated by cattlemen for their herds.

No wonder the Indian is driven to despair, since he is willing and eager to work; he has had the means of livelihood, and they have been persistently, gradually wrested from him, until he finds himself face to face with a future of absolute hopelessness.

The Jackson and Kinney report continues: "All white settlers now on reservations should be removed. For the last four years [now for the last twenty-one years] stray settlers have been going in upon the reservation tracts. Thus, in many instances the Indians' fields and settlements have been wrested from them, and they in their turn have not known where they could or could not go. . . . The amount of land set off in Indian reservations in Southern California appears by the record to be very large, but the proportion of it which is really available is very small. San Diego County itself is four-fifths desert and mountain, and it is no exaggeration to say that the proportion of desert and mountain in the reservations is greater than this."

As to Mesa Grande, the report states: "The condition of the Indians in this district is too full of complications and troubles to be written out here in detail. . . . Whether it is possible for the Government to put these Mesa Grande Indians in a position to protect themselves, and have anything like a fair chance to make their living in their present situation, is a question; but that it ought to be done if possible is beyond question. It is grievous to think that this fine tract of land, so long owned and occupied by these Indians, and in good faith intended by the Government to be set aside for their use, has thus passed into other hands (by white men crowding the Indians out). Even if the reservation tract, some three hundred acres, has been by fraudulent representations restored to the public domain, and now occupied by a man

named Clelland, who has taken steps to patent it, the tract by proper investigation and action could probably be reclaimed for the Indians' use."

It is needless to say that such action has never been taken; and in the other instances mentioned where white men had stolen the Indians' land, driving them off at the point of a musket, the white man's right (?) of possession has never been questioned.

It can not be by chance that the same thing has happened so often in this region—viz., the setting off of a reservation for Indians, supposedly to include the sites of the villages which they were contentedly occupying, and the later "discovery" that the village was left outside the reservation lines, requiring that the Indians should again and again move off. The reservation at Capitan Grande was found to include mostly the steep bare sides of the mountain walls of the cañon. No one who has not seen these California mountains can realize how savage, barren, and forbidding a mountain-side can be. "Capitan Grande is a disgrace," said Father Ubach, of San Diego, with indignant sorrow in his voice.

At Los Conejos Mrs. Jackson found the Indians raising corn, beans, and squash, "and yet there is not a plow in the village. . . . The Captain asked for plows, harness and all things to work with."

They are still asking for these things. What is the reason that the Government has neglected to give these Indians the absolute necessities for their subsistence, in the desperate conditions into which neglect, fraud, and oppression have forced them?

Since the full report I have referred to I am unaware of any special interest shown by any one connected with the Government concerning the condition of these Indians. The agent's reports are brief and businesslike; though Mr. Estudillo, the former agent, occasionally urged the misery of their condition: "Some of their land could not

support a horned toad," he said, "much less Indians, who are human beings, with human thoughts and feelings." Washington lent no attention to this statement. Nothing was done. A few plows were furnished here and there, of an unpractical make, requiring for repair so expensive a point that the Indians could not afford to mend them when broken. A little barbed wire was given, not nearly enough and not rightly distributed, since during the last summer the white men's cattle broke into the Indians' fields at Laguna and destroyed the year's crops. No reparation is ever made for such damages as this; but the Indians must constantly keep all stock tied, as, if they stray, the white man steals them to pay for "damages."

Mrs. Jackson recommends that: "There should always be provided for the Mission Indians' agency a small fund for the purchase of food and clothing for the very old and sick in times of special destitution. The Mission Indians as a class do not beg. They are proud-spirited and choose to earn their own living. They will endure a great deal before they will ask for help. But in seasons of drought or when their little crops have for some reason failed, there is sometimes great distress in the villages."

"There is no Government land remaining in Southern California," the report continues, "in blocks of sufficient size for either white or Indian occupancy. The reason that the isolated little settlements of Indians are being so infringed upon and seized, even at the desert's edge and in stony fastnesses of mountains, is that all the good lands—*i. e.*, lands with water, or upon which water can be developed—are taken up."

The report recommended the purchase of Pauma Ranch, adjoining La Jolla reservation. If this had been done, no doubt it would have made "comfortable provision for all the Indians, except those living within the boundaries of confirmed grants," as Mrs. Jackson hoped; but it was never purchased.

If new homes were to be provided, she urged the purchase of Santa Ysabel Ranch, which could then have been bought for $95,000. Seventeen years of continued encroachments have made the situation more and more difficult; but it is impossible to believe that the Government, which spends thousands of dollars upon less worthy tribes, will contentedly submit to allow the gradual crowding off from land and life of the scattered remnants of these unfortunate and worthy people.

I took a tour last summer through some of the remoter reservations where the agent had made only one visit, and where white visitors seldom penetrate; and moved by my representations of the needs of the case, Rev. H. B. Restarick, of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, San Diego, Cal., accompanied by Rt. Rev. Joseph H. Johnson, of Los Angeles, followed me later in the same tour, slightly varied to take in a few places I did not see, and not going so far as I did, to Manzanita, one of the most inaccessible places. Bishop Johnson says: "The wretchedness and misery of the Indians on most of the reservations in Southern California that I have visited, can not be overstated. If the policy of the Government is to exterminate its unfortunate wards, it has made a good start in that direction. If the policy is to assist and uplift these people and make them self-supporting, it will have to change its methods." But neither the Bishop, Mr. Restarick, nor myself have visited the Desert Indians, belonging to this same agency; and a full report can not be made without including them, since the worst has not been seen until they are visited. In summer, when the temperature ranges above 120 degrees, it is hardly possible to visit their settlements, but I hope that something may be accomplished soon in this direction.

Relief must take the form of permanent aid, placing all these Indians in a position where they can support themselves. A fund to buy food for the oldest and most indi-

gent is a necessity; but these Indians do not want to be fed with rations. One of them said: "We do not want flour and sugar, but we want a chance to buy these things with money of our own earning. We want good land."

This is the universal idea among them. Could there be a better foundation for self-respecting industry than such a desire?

In the case of these Indians we do not have to combat the habit of the nomadic existence which so easily becomes converted into idleness when the pursuits of the wilderness and the industries of the chase must be given up. We do not have to teach them the white man's ways as something new and strange, for they have long since adopted his dress and manner of living so far as poverty will allow. They are all anxious for better things, yearning for the chance to work at productive industries, to make better homes, to live in decency and comfort. This is still the prevalent feeling among them. The slow but certain processes of degradation which must come to any community or any family when reduced to absolute destitution are already at work among them; but so far they resist them. They still care, they still struggle, they still beg for land, not for charity; for work, not for food. If we leave them in this condition, or if our aid is only the temporary makeshift of rations, they will sink lower and lower, and we shall be responsible for their degradation.

They are now ready to accept good influences. The seed the early Spanish friars planted still bears fruit. The unfortunate divisions among professed Christians make it possible for many worthy people to remain blind to the beauty of religion unless it speaks through the formulæ most acceptable to themselves. They can not see the forms of Catholicism without burning with zeal to uproot them. I am no Catholic, but I have seldom seen anything more sincere than the devout religious worship among these poor neglected people. They cherish this as their

most precious possession, the only good gift left to them of those the early fathers gave them.

In places where no priest has visited for "many, many years" they still have their little church, an adobe hut, or one of boughs; the altar is decked with a few poor ornaments, and candles set in tin cans for candlesticks. The men enter with uncovered heads, and the people kneel on the earth floor. One better educated than the rest or with a better memory for the Spanish liturgy will say the prayers, and the people make the responses as reverently as at a cathedral service. The simple faith which rears that humble altar should commend itself to any professed Christian, by whatever name he chooses to be called.

"They are a gentle, friendly race, incredibly patient under wrongs," as Mrs. Jackson says. "They are all so polite, even in their rags," says Mr. Restarick, "so gentle and respectful."

"If they were bloodthirsty savages," remarks Bishop Johnson, "the Government would probably provide them with ample rations, and other things needful to keep them from going on the war-path; but little is being done for these peaceful wards of the nation, who are every way more deserving than the savage tribes who have received so much of the nation's bounty."

To understand the condition of the land upon which these Indians are placed, one should visit the Indian settlements and see it for himself; for in the greater part of our country, particularly in the East, it is difficult for people to realize conditions in an arid section, where rain never falls during the summer-time, and where of late years the winter rains have been few and far between. The following list of places in this agency, with some notice of the character of the land, was prepared by the agent at my request; and I add to it the population at each place as far as I could obtain it from the figures of an old report, which will serve until corrected:

MISSION TULE RIVER CONSOLIDATED AGENCY.

Name of Reservation.	*Distance from Agency.*	*General Condition of Land.*
Agua Caliente No. 2, Population 69.	50 miles.	Desert land; very little water for irrigation.
Augustine, ... Population 43.	75 miles.	Desert; no water.
Cahuilla, ... Population 186.	35 miles.	Mountain valley, stock land; little water.
Capitan Grande, . . . Population 136.	130 miles.	Portion good; very little water.
Campo, ... Population 21.	170 miles.	Poor land; no water.
Cuyapipi, ... Population 34.	105 miles.	Poor land; no water.
Cabazon, ... Population 41.	70 miles.	Desert; produces nothing; no water.
Injaha (Anahuac), . . . Population 45.	100 miles.	Small amount of poor land.
Los Coyotes, ... Population 123.	85 miles.	Mountainous, very little farming land.
Morongo, ... Population 294.	25 miles.	Fair land with water.
Mesa Grande, ... Population 206.	75 miles.	Small amount farming land, but little water; portion good stock land.
Pala, ... Population 43.	40 miles.	Good land; water; allotted.
Pauma, ... Population 62.	35 miles.	Portion good land with water.
Potrero (allotted), . . . Population 253.	75 miles.	Portion good; water on part.
Rincon (allotted), . . . Population 130.	65 miles.	Sandy; portion of land watered.
Sycuan (allotted), . . . Population 37.	110 miles.	Small quantity agricultural land.
Santa Ysabel, ... Population 97.	80 miles.	Mountainous, stock land; no water.
San Felipe, ... Population 78.	85 miles.	Title in dispute.
San Jacinto, ... Population 174.	6 miles.	Mostly poor land, very little water.
San Manuel, ... Population 38.	55 miles.	Worthless; dry hills.
Santa Rosa, ... Population 55.	52 miles.	Mountainous, timber, but little farming.
Santa Ynez, ... Population 67.	240 miles.	Good land, plenty of water, in litigation.

Name of Reservation.	*Distance from Agency.*	*General Condition of Land.*
Tule River, ... Population 106.	480 miles.	Good reservation; small amount farming land; well watered stock and timber land.
La Posta, ... Population 22.	160 miles.	Worthless, poor land; no water.
Martinez, ...	150 miles.	Poor land; no water.
Laguna, ... Population 6.	130 miles.	Small amount farm land; springs.
Temecula (allotted), . . Population 175.	35 miles.	Almost worthless for lack of water.
Torres, ... Population 319.	75 miles.	Desert, no farming; Artesian water could be obtained, land would then be productive.
Twenty-nine Palms, . . Population 27.	190 miles.	Desert.
Agua Caliente No. 1. Population 149.	60 miles.	Some good land; small portion watered by springs; value lies in the hot mineral springs.
Mataguay, ...	65 miles.	Fair land; no water.
Puerta de la Cruz, . . .	55 miles.	Small amount of good land.
San José, ... Population 10.	60 miles.	Small amount of good land.

The last four reservations are situated on the well-known Warner's Ranch. The ownership is now in dispute, awaiting the decision of the United States Supreme Court.

Manzanita, half a day's journey from La Posta, is omitted from this list. Land worthless. Population, 57.

Los Conejos, near Capitan Grande, is omitted. People there said to be in very bad condition from poverty of land.

Yuma, with population of 707 miserably poor desert Indians, should also come in this list.

The few good reservations mentioned should immediately be allotted in such a way that the Indians shall be secured against aggression. To aid the others is a large problem. It is easy enough to allow them to be shoved further back year by year; but to correct the miserable position into which years of injustice and wrongful aggression have placed them is not so easy. When Mrs. Jackson made her report, seventeen years ago, it would have been

still comparatively easy to have righted the worst of the evil. The Pauma Ranch purchase would have done much; the Santa Ysabel Ranch purchase would have done still more. Allotting the remaining settlements and securing their title past dispute would have settled the question, humanely, justly, as it must be settled now, unless we wish to stand on record as cruelly careless, merciless, and unjust toward these helpless people whose condition is in no way their own fault, and should be amended by those who have forced them into the strait.

The United States Government, by granting patents to land occupied by Indians, by failing to investigate the circumstances of fraudulent reservation surveys, and the stealing of large amounts of reservation land by whites, has been responsible and is responsible for the wrongs which are still going on and will go on unless checked by legislation, until every Indian is forced off the face of this country. They are dying very fast, of want, semi-starvation, the ills that attack the old and the children, colds, consumption, grippe, and the like, aggravated by lack of warm clothing and of sufficient food. The sick and dying lie upon earth floors on a bed of rags without a coverlet. At Manzanita the fifty-seven people of the place were eating a little green corn as their only food. They eat the manzanita berries when they can find them, and acorns, boiled grass, anything to sustain life; but the drought blighted even the wild crops this year. There were few manzanita berries, and the acorns fell from the trees in June. In winter, when the rain sets the herbage growing, some small game, rats, and jack-rabbits may be found; but in summer the parched earth is like a desert, and not even a rabbit is to be seen. The young men all ride away from home, fifty miles or more, to obtain chance work at wood-cutting, digging wells, doing any labor the white ranchers have to be done; but many of the white farmers on large tracts of the best land are too poor in this country to hire laborers.

The old Indians must stay at home, deprived of any means of livelihood.

A glance at the desert soil and heaps of rocks, their only field for agriculture, would convince the most careless observer that it is not laziness which has brought them to want and despair. Everything shows evidence of industry. The tiny patches of level land are laboriously cultivated.

It is the extremest cruelty, a pitiless irony, to require of the Indian that which would be an impossible task for a white man with all his superior advantages; to expect him, without tools, without water, and with miserable soil, to support a family and rise to the refinements of civilization.

In considering the case of the Mission Indians we must not overlook an acute phase of the subject, which has lately presented itself, in connection with the irrigation and settlement of the desert in San Diego County, and the proposed opening up of the New River district. As the time to protect these Indians is when the rush for entrance upon their lands begins, not after patents have been filed upon that land, so the present moment is the time to protect the reservations or settlements of the desert Indians from the mad rush of land-grabbers, who are going out even upon the desert, expecting the development of water to give it value. The "San Diego Union" says: "The eyes of thousands of persons were turned toward this section during the past year, and something like 45,000 acres were filed upon under the desert or homestead laws. It will not be long before there is not an acre left, for the land is being taken up at a rapid rate."

Not a word is said about Indian occupancy in this district, and although I have not at hand a county map of San Diego by which one can locate their reservations, it is more than probable that the patents now being given encroach upon some of the villages or settlements of these Indians. It is miserable land at the best; the

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Indians are extremely destitute; but special care should be taken that not an acre now occupied by them is seized upon, as to turn them out upon the desert away from the few springs they own would mean actual and immediate death.

That settlers will give no consideration to their prior claims is certain. The whole history of the settlement of California has shown this; and although the early development of this forbidding and really terrible country is not probable, the land can be filed upon under the desert law without residence; and an Indian village could be seized and occupied at leisure.

Immediate action should be taken by the Government to secure all settlements of the desert Indians from aggression, and their reservations should be allotted like those of the other tribes of the Mission Indians.

For years these Indians have been holding out imploring hands, begging, through any means whereby they might find voice, not for food, but for land; not for charity, but for justice.

Will not the Congress of our land listen to this appeal? Will not every friend of the Indian, every friend of the right, use his influence to enforce it and to give it emphasis?